

Oregon Federal Executive Board Shared Neutrals/Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee

2004 - 2006 Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

Strategic Plan Purpose

To establish a roadmap that will lead the Oregon Federal Executive Board's Shared Neutrals (SN) program to a satisfactory range of services, sound resource capacity (funding, personnel), active membership base, and the highest quality alternative dispute resolution services (ADR) for our members.

Our Mission

Provide quality dispute resolution services for government organizations in Oregon & SW Washington.

Our Vision

The Shared Neutrals Program will excel as a dispute resolution service when the following milestones are achieved:

- Member agencies representatives affirm that the SN program is their preferred ADR service.
- Client, liaison and mediator feedback rates the program as substantially "positive" - convenient, timely and effective.
- The organization's diversity reflects the population that we serve..

Organization & History

Started in 1996 as a pilot program, the Oregon Federal Executive Board's (OFEB) SN program currently has approximately 25 participating agencies, 40 neutrals (mediators) and manages 60-80 cases annually. The SN program provides ADR for federal, state, and local government agencies. Flexibility of service is a core value of the program. The program is currently managed by a board of 8-10 volunteers and a paid, half-time program manager.

Stakeholders

Federal: Army Corps of Engineers, Bonneville Power Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Chemawa Indian School, Forest Service, Indian Health Service, Internal Revenue Service (Seattle), Oregon Military Department, Small Business Administration, U.S. Attorney, Oregon, USDA/Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service, VA Medical Center

State & Local: Centennial School Dist. City of Beaverton, City of Gresham, City of Milwaukie, City of Portland, City of Vancouver, City of Wilsonville, Clark County, Dept. of Corrections HR (Washington), Dept. of Social Health Services (Washington)

Funding Organizations: Forest Service, Bonneville Power Administration, Oregon Federal Executive Board

Other Supporting Organizations: Community Mediation Services (CMS)

Individual Supporters: Fran Petersen

Goals

- Align core services with organizational and client needs.
- Secure a formal support structure (administrative, funding) that leads to greater service satisfaction and efficiency for our stakeholders.
- Maintain and recruit high-quality, diverse program participants (board, members, liaisons, mediators).
- Strategically expand access to Shared Neutrals services throughout the public sector in our region.

**Oregon Federal Executive Board
Shared Neutrals/Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee**

2004 - 2006 Strategic Plan

I. Strategic Plan Purpose

To establish a roadmap that will lead the Oregon Federal Executive Board's Shared Neutrals (SN) program to a satisfactory range of services, sound resource capacity (funding, personnel), active membership base, and the highest quality alternative dispute resolution services (ADR) for our members.

II. Mission & Vision

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III. Organization & History

Started in 1996 as a pilot program, the Oregon Federal Executive Board's (OFEB) SN program currently has approximately 25 participating agencies, 40 neutrals (mediators) and manages 60-80 cases annually. The program provides ADR for federal, state, and local government agencies. Participating agencies can draw from the program's roster of ADR specialists and use the services with minimal paperwork requirements. In return, agencies contribute mediator services or other support, as detailed in the membership agreement. Flexibility of service is a core value of the program. Individual agencies have a great deal of choice in how they access and use the program. The program has an open-door policy about how it uses different types of ADR, as long as the practitioner meets rigorous standards.

The program is currently managed by a Subcommittee of 8-10 volunteers and a paid, half-time program coordinator. Funding for the program has been at a minimum and needs to be addressed. Primary staffing support comes from the Bureau of Land Management, which "houses" the Program Coordinator FTE, and the U.S. Forest Service, which funds the Program Coordinator position and some basic training costs. Operational funding is presently being filled by contributions or in-kind support from the OFEB or other federal agencies. The Bonneville Power Administration provides for the use of personal computer and other office equipment. The OFEB has just agreed to provide a fund to cover minor mediator, liaison and subcommittee member expenses.

The program has done well thus far in maintaining the services it was founded to provide. This Shared Neutrals Strategic Plan will identify areas for improvement and give vision to where the program will be headed in the months and years to come.

IV. Stakeholders

Member Organizations

<u>Federal</u> Army Corps of Engineers Bonneville Power Administration Bureau of Land Management Chemawa Indian School Department of Energy, Albany Research Center Environmental Protection Agency Forest Service Indian Health Service Internal Revenue Service, Seattle Oregon Military Department Small Business Administration U.S. Attorney, Oregon USDA, Agricultural Statistics Service USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service VA Medical Center	<u>State & Local</u> Centennial School Dist. City of Beaverton City of Gresham City of Milwaukie City of Portland City of Vancouver City of Wilsonville Clark County Dept. of Corrections HR, Washington Dept. of Social Health Services/Washington
<u>Funding Organizations</u> Forest Service Bonneville Power Administration Oregon Federal Executive Board	<u>Other Supporting Organizations</u> Community Mediation Services (CMS) <u>Individual Supporters</u> Fran Petersen, Kimberly Koch-Hult

V. **Environmental Scan**

a. External Trends - *Industry, Social, Economic, Political, Technological, Competitive, Clients*

The ADR industry has been shifting in recent years toward increased flexibility of services in order to align more closely with the changing needs of employees and their employers. This includes the expanded use of small and large group facilitation, team building, case management, consultation and conflict assessment. There is more interest overall in systemic issues in workplace conflicts and a more complete array of ADR services.

Indications are that government reorganization has impacted workplace stress and the increase of conflicts. In addition, shrinking budgets are forcing agencies to consolidate mediation services in-house, or seek services from a third-party (such as Shared Neutrals). This may be influencing an increased application of ADR for other services, such as facilitating or resolving disputes in contracting/contractor partnerships. Also, federal requirements for ADR have changed recently. In 2000 all federal agencies were required to offer ADR (essentially mediation) as part of their EEO program, which was a major shift. Indications are that an even greater emphasis on use of ADR to resolve conflicts is on the horizon.

Other services available to member agencies include in-house programs, contractors, and the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service.

b. Internal Trends - *People, Products/Services, Systems & Structures, Financial Resources, Innovation*

The Oregon FEB Shared Neutrals programs is already well-established as an exceptional, high-quality program, comparable to any other similar FEB program nationwide. The Subcommittee, mediators and liaisons involved are by and large dedicated, skilled and creative individuals. The core focus of the service is on traditional mediation and alternative dispute resolution, with some small group facilitation also taking place on demand.

A formal subcommittee structure, program guide, mediation and evaluation forms, statistical analysis and a training program currently exist. More defined roles, diversity of participants and a marketing focus are needed. Stable financial resources to support existing services and the opportunity for growth are critical. The program appears to currently be at capacity with regard to management resources, but demand for services is growing and the potential for expansion is significant.

New types of data collection and analysis have been implemented in 2003. The development of a strategic plan appears to be a rarity within the FEB Shared Neutrals community, and other FEB programs have expressed great interest in the Oregon FEB's SN process.

VI. **SWOT Analysis**

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>	<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Threats</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide an incredible service with exceptional, quantifiable cost savings:</i> (2003 estimates) EEO: 22x\$50K/case = \$1.1 million Non-EEO: 55x\$17K/case = \$935K Contract Cases: 2x\$28.8K/case=\$57.6K TOTAL SAVINGS = \$2.1 million • <i>Forty Shared Neutrals trained mediators</i> • <i>Forest Service funding of the Program Coordinator</i> • <i>System works from mediator perspective</i> • <i>Good mix of new and mature professionals</i> • <i>Formal, effective and time-tested collaborative process</i> • <i>Mediator skills & training programs</i> • <i>Improved performance metrics</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dependence on a single source of funding.</i> • <i>Lack of funding to train or expand service and support agency liaisons.</i> • <i>Need for more ethnic, cultural and gender diversity on roster and board to match workforce diversity.</i> • <i>Lack of marketing and education within federal and member agencies.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Market the Program as a cost-effective resource to budget-strapped agencies</i> • <i>Provide communications skills training to federal (and other) agencies (and gain additional funding for SN)</i> • <i>Expand into inter-agency partnership facilitations, other areas of ADR</i> • <i>Expand membership base - the demand is there</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Limited/tightening budgets</i> • <i>Growing beyond capacity to maintain high quality</i> • <i>Growing too rapidly into non-core areas</i>

VII. Goals, Objectives & Strategies

Goals

- *Align core services with organizational and client needs.*
- *Secure a formal support structure (administrative, funding) that leads to greater service satisfaction and efficiency for our stakeholders.*
- *Maintain and recruit high-quality, diverse program participants (board, members, liaisons, mediators).*
- *Strategically expand Shared Neutrals services for member agencies and throughout the public sector in our region.*

Goal 1 *Align core services with organizational and client needs.*

Objective 1.a. Prioritize the range of services to be offered for the next 3-5 years.

Strategy 1.a.(i) Assess the market needs, our capabilities, and training needs to meet the agreed service requirements.

Goal 2 *Secure a formal support structure (administrative, funding) that leads to greater service satisfaction and efficiency for our stakeholders.*

Objective 2 a. Define the board and program manager roles and their relationship with the OFEB.

Objective 2.b. Establish adequate funding and resources for the Program Coordinator, in order to maintain quality, effective, timely service.

Strategy 2.a.(i) Write job descriptions and responsibilities for the program manager, board members, liaisons & mediators.

Strategy 2.b.(i) Share the “Business Case” with member agencies to solicit resource support for the program.

Strategy 2.a.(ii) Craft bylaws for the operation of the organization, including relationship parameters between Shared Neutrals and the OFEB.

Strategy 2.b.(ii) Release a quarterly activity report and an annual performance report to all stakeholders.

Strategy 2.b.(iii) Annually solicit sponsorships from governmental or private sector organizations for select events (annual meeting, training, recognition).

Goal 3 ***Maintain and recruit high-quality, diverse program participants (board, members, liaisons, mediators)***

<i>Objective 3.a.</i> Enforce existing procedures with regard to mediator and member participation.	<i>Objective 3.b.</i> Enhance support and training of program participants.
<i>Strategy 3.a.(i)</i> Review current roster and inform those who aren't meeting continuing education and caseload requirements.	<i>Strategy 3.b.(i)</i> Survey program participants at least every two years to identify their needs and develop training, info and support to meet them.
<i>Strategy 3.a.(ii)</i> Screen new participants more closely for their overall ability to fulfill expectations of time and continuing education.	<i>Strategy 3.b.(ii)</i> Establish teams to meet certain types of needs (i.e. training for managers, marketing to employees, conflict coaching, etc.).
<i>Objective 3.c.</i> Increase profile of program participants with regard to diversity to reflect our service population.	
<i>Strategy 3.c.(i)</i> Actively recruit diverse members to program participant roster.	

Goal 4 ***Strategically expand Shared Neutrals services for member agencies and throughout the public sector in our region.***

<i>Objective 4.a.</i> Recruit a full and active marketing standing committee.	<i>Objective 4.b.</i> Develop a marketing plan specifically tailored for each participating agency.
<i>Strategy 4.a.(i)</i> Recruit marketing committee members from current mediators, liaisons or OFEB Public Affairs Committee.	<i>Strategy 4.b.(i)</i> Assess the market needs of each of our member agencies and key target agencies that we would like to recruit.
<i>Strategy 4.a.(ii)</i> Annually recruit a consultant/intern from Portland State or other appropriate local college program as a member.	<i>Strategy 4.b.(ii)</i> Collaborate with liaisons of member agencies to develop marketing plans.

VIII. Action Plan

Goal	Objective	Strategy	Action Required	Responsible	Date Due
1. <i>Align core services with organizational and client needs.</i>	A. Prioritize the range of services to be offered for the next 3-5 years.	i.(a). Assess the market needs, our capabilities, and the training needs to meet the agreed service requirements i.(b). Seek recommendations from Ad-Hoc Committee on Facilitation i.(c). Plan Assessment strategy with volunteers from roster	a) Kim will change the wording of these strategies b) Draft of recommendations to Subcommittee 11/04 c) Assessment plan by 2/05	a) Kim b) Ad-Hoc Committee c) Fran w/ mediator volunteers	a) Done 9/04 b) Done 9/04 c) Feb. '05
		ii. Develop action plan based on this assessment of Agency needs.		Fran w/ mediator volunteers	2005
	B. assure that services meet party needs	i. Institutionalize 6-month follow-up of mediation participants and a way to assess their needs	Get interns on ongoing basis specifically to help with 6-month follow-ups	Karin & Mark proposal to PSU in December	Have 6-month follow up in place (w/ intern) by Feb. '05
		ii. Develop & maintain 6-month data in database	Define interview questions & how to enter data on master case database	Kim & Karin	Done 9/04
2. <i>Secure a formal support structure (administrative, funding) that leads to greater service satisfaction and efficiency for our stakeholders.</i>	A. Define the board and program manager roles and their relationship with the OFEB.	i. Define Program Coordinator's job description & responsibilities with tiered priorities (e.g. critical base program needs, next level of priority needs, etc.), relationship to the Board, and supervisory controls.	Draft to Diane Williams by October	Karen Bell	Dec. '04
		ii. Write job descriptions for board members, liaisons & mediators.		Personnel Committee	March '05
		iii.(a) Amend bylaws for the operation of the organization,	(a) approve current by-law changes	a) Karin & Mark	Done 9/04
		iii.(b) including relationship parameters between Shared Neutrals and the OFEB.	(b) Consider new text from the FEB policy committee guidelines (where appropriate)	b) Fran	Bring to Feb.'05 meeting for review
	B. Establish continuous funding and resources for the Program, in order to maintain quality, effective, timely service.	i. Create Business Case handout (1-page)	Complete Business Case	Fran, Trent, Bev	January meeting
		ii. Share the "Business Case" with member agencies to solicit resource support for the program	Pilot visits spring '05	Fran & other Subcommittee members	Early Jan.'05
		iii.(a). Release monthly activity report to Subcommittee	Ongoing	Karin	Ongoing
		iii.(b). Release an "annual performance report" to all stakeholders (member agency liaisons, mediators and committee members).	Define "Annual Performance Report" (what & when?)	Kim & Karin	Done 9/04
		iii.(c). Prepare annual FEB/OPM report	Ongoing	Karin	Ongoing
		iv. Annually solicit sponsorships from all member agencies for select events and projects. Include non-monetary contributions, and educate member agencies about how to be creative in their support.	Pilot with Business Case, March '05	Fran & Trent	March '05

Goal	Objective	Strategy	Action Required	Responsible	Date Due
3. <i>Maintain and recruit high-quality, diverse program participants.</i>	A. Enforce existing procedures with regard to mediator and member participation.	i. Review current roster and inform those who aren't meeting continuing education and caseload requirements.	Training & Activity Logs reviewed each year	Personnel Committee	Ongoing. Due every February
		ii. Screen new mediator applicants more closely for their overall ability to fulfill expectations of time and continuing education.	Added to screening questions	Personnel Committee	Ongoing
	B. Enhance support and training of Liaisons, Mediators and Board Members.	i. Survey Liaisons, Mediators and Board Members annually to identify their needs and develop training, info and support to meet them.	Evaluations handed out at Fall Training and Annual Meeting	Training Committee	Ongoing
		ii. Establish teams to meet certain types of needs (i.e. training for managers, marketing to employees, conflict coaching, cultural competency , etc.).		Training Committee	Ongoing
	C. Increase profile of program participants with regard to diversity to reflect our service population.	i. Actively recruit diverse members to program participant roster.	Interview liaisons re: elements of diversity in their organizations, and how we can better serve those populations.	Trent, Personnel Committee	Ongoing
4. <i>Strategically expand Shared Neutrals services for member agencies and throughout the public sector in our region.</i>	A. Recruit an active marketing standing committee.	i. Recruit marketing committee members from current mediators, liaisons or OFEB Public Affairs Committee.	Form Marketing Committee and announce action plan in December	Bev, Fran & Karin	Done 11/04
		ii. Annually recruit an intern from Portland State or other appropriate local college program (to join the marketing committee).	Proposal to PSU Fall Term *note: I think we decided to use our roster, and not get an intern at this time (11/04)	Karin & Mark	Dec. 2004*
	B. Develop a marketing plan specifically tailored for each member agency.	i. Assess the market needs of each of our member agencies and key target agencies that we would like to recruit.		Marketing Committee	Feb. '05
		ii. Collaborate with liaisons of member agencies to develop marketing plans.		Marketing Committee	Feb. '05